



police@oak-park.us

www.oak-park.us/police

708.386.3800

Special Neighborhood Alert

Sept. 14, 2009 – Four attempted late night and early morning residential burglaries over the weekend have prompted Oak Park Police to intensify efforts to get residents to lock all windows and doors at night.

A burglar attempted to enter three homes in the 300 block of North Humphrey Avenue and one home in the 600 block of Harvey Avenue – one at about 11:30 p.m., Sun., and the other three in the early morning hours Monday. This latest pattern is similar to several burglaries that occurred in a different area of the community during the month of July.

In these latest incidents, residents in two of the homes heard noises and likely scared off the thief before he could get in. In the other two, the attempt was discovered the next morning when a chair was found under the window of one home and a ladder by the window of another home – items that belonged to the residents and were easily available to the would-be thief. One of the residents who heard noises and went to investigate saw a bald, African-American male standing outside the window.

As the investigation continues, police are urging residents to take the following precautions:

- Close and lock all windows and doors at night or install devices that limit the travel of the sash or door.
- Make sure outdoor furniture, rain barrels or other items cannot be used as a makeshift ladder to reach higher windows.
- Install and use good lighting – features like motion detectors and automatic dusk-to-dawn switching are especially effective.
- Consider audible alarms on entry points.
- Prominently post an alarm system warning decal.
- Get to know your neighbors so you can keep an eye out for each other's property.

For more security tips and even an assessment of your home, contact your RBO (Resident Beat Officer), who will examine your property and offer practical suggestions for improving security – visit www.oak-park.us/police for more information.

Don't hesitate to call 9-1-1...

Oak Park Police rely on residents. If you see unusual activity, suspicious people or vehicles in your neighborhood, call 9-1-1 immediately.

###



Preventing residential and garage burglaries

Home and garage burglaries are among the most common crimes in Oak Park. Burglars may use ordinary tools such as screwdrivers and crowbars to pry open weak locks, or simply break a window or kick in a door. However, in more than a third of the burglaries, offenders don't use force at all – they just walk through an unlocked door or crawl through an unlocked window. With just a few simple steps, property owners can reduce the likelihood of becoming a burglary victim.

Protect your home

- Close and lock all doors and windows.
- Install audible alarms on entry points.
- Prominently post an alarm system warning decal.
- Increase outdoor lighting – use motion sensors to save electricity.
- Get to know your neighbors so you can keep an eye out for each other's property.

Protect your garage

- Keep the doorframe and locks in good condition – use a deadbolt with long screws that reach well in the frame structure.
- Always lock the side service door – in half of all garage burglaries in Oak Park, the thief walked through an unlocked service door.
- Cover windows so a thief can't see what is inside.
- Make sure the overhead door is closed completely before leaving the garage.
- Install good lighting – features like motion detectors and automatic dusk-to-dawn switching are especially effective.

How thieves think...

Burglars consider the following when selecting targets:

- Familiarity and convenience – how well do I know this neighborhood?
- Occupancy – can I easily tell if anyone is home?
- Visibility – can I get in and out without being seen?
- Accessibility – how easily and how fast can I get in and out?
- Vulnerability and security – is the resident elderly or is there a security system?
- Potential rewards – what will I get for the risk?

Keep up to date on criminal activity in the neighborhood – attend your monthly Resident Beat Officer (RBO) meeting. Visit www.oak-park.us/police for schedules.

Oak Park Police Department

Committed to community, integrity and excellence in public safety

123 Madison St., Oak Park, IL 60302

708.386.3800 non-emergency

police@oak-park.us

708.434.1630 crime tip hotline

www.oak-park.us/police

Always call 9-1-1 in an emergency.
